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TEACHING THE ESSENTIAL READING SKILLS IN SOCIAL STUDIES.

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TEACHERS NEED TO APPLY DIVERSE TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING THE READING SKILLS STUDENTS NEED TO COPE WITH THE COMPLEX STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL STUDIES. A SUGGESTED OVERALL APPROACH COVERS A DIRECTED READING ACTIVITY, VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT, A STUDY FORMULA, AND STUDY SKILLS INSTRUCTION. TEACHERS COLLEGE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY FORMULATED A DIRECTED READING ACTIVITY PLAN WHICH INCLUDES READINESS, CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT, SILENT READING, DISCUSSION, AND REREADING. SINCE SOCIAL STUDIES HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE VOCABULARY, AND, SINCE ITS TEXTBOOKS INVOLVE MORE DIFFICULT READING, VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CONTEXT AND WORD STUDY WOULD IMPROVE OVERALL COMPREHENSION. A WORKABLE STUDY FORMULA IS NEEDED TO HELP STUDENTS STUDY IN THIS AREA. ROBINSON'S SQ3R FORMULA, MODIFIED FOR INTERMEDIATE LEVEL, IS ILLUSTRATED IN A SAMPLE OF FIVE STEPS--SURVEY, QUESTION, READ, RECITE, AND REVIEW. A FOURTH AREA IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY SKILLS INVOLVING EVALUATION AND SELECTION, ORGANIZATION, LOCATION OF INFORMATION, FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS, AND OTHER SPECIALIZED SKILLS. KARLIN'S CHECKLIST OF STUDY SKILLS SUGGESTS A USEFUL FORMAT FOR STUDY SKILLS INSTRUCTION. EIGHTEEN REFERENCES ON READING IN THE CONTENT AREAS ARE INCLUDED. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE (SEATTLE, MAY 4-6, 1967). (NS)

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TEACHING THE ESSENTIAL READING SKILLS IN SOCIAL STUDIES

SESSION VI - Reading In The Content Areas

Within the past few years teachers have become aware of the need for teaching reading skills in the content areas. One of the major content areas, Social Studies, requires an approach somewhat different from other subject areas. Let us view the topic from four interrelated, yet different angles.

Directed Reading Activity

Elementary and secondary teachers who are involved in teaching Social Studies have found increasing success in presenting their subject matter through the use of a directed reading activity.

Whipple (18) states the format of present day Social Studies

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texts is similar to a reading book used for basal instruction. However, the readers job is quite different. Children need guidance in selecting what to remember and then techniques in how to remember (17).

The New York State Curriculum Guides (8) (17) point out the advisability of a directed reading activity for basic instructional purposes. Spache (15) indicates the superiority of guided reading in the teaching of Social Studies.

All too often students are forced to plunge into complex materials with little idea of what to look for or even why they are reading a particular text. The involved structure of Social Studies texts requires preparation and assistance for the student. Strange (16) suggests that the teacher can guide the student through the use of prepared questions. Let us go a step further and prepare not only the questions for consideration during the lesson, but the necessary preparation prior to beginning any part of the lesson.

A Plan for a directed reading activity in Social Studies is contained in FIVE STEPS TO READING SUCCESS (2)

Step One: Readiness

Arousing pupil interest

Setting a purpose for the reading

Developing a background and a sense of continuity

Creating an awareness of the reading required

Step Two: Concept Development

Discussing the vocabulary and concepts which need clarification

Explaining how context may give a term meaning

Studying pronunciation and spelling when appropriate

Step Three: Silent Reading

Locating specific details

Finding the main idea and supporting details

Seeing a vivid picture through word concepts

Locating information by skimming

Determining accuracy of statements

Step Four: Discussion (Oral or Written)

Checking comprehension

Sharing different points of view

Step Five: Rereading (Silent or Oral)

Checking accuracy

Examining critically

Karlin (5) discusses a directed reading activity with a slight modification. His five step process includes:

1. Readiness - vocabulary and purpose
2. Silent Reading - refer to question
3. Discussion - relating to silent reading
4. Rereading - for different purposes
5. Application - to the lesson

Gates (2) suggested that we cultivate the students interest in each content subject. He believed that Social Studies texts needed to be reformed because of the too difficult readability, the poor literary

quality, and the lack of organization of school materials. Since it is extremely difficult for the classroom teacher to rewrite texts while teaching the students in the classroom, perhaps the next best thing would be to circumvent the problem through the use of a directed reading activity.

Vocabulary

Each subject area has its own vocabulary which is unique. Social Studies certainly is no exception to the rule. It is vital for the teacher to develop the vocabulary of the specific lesson within its own context or comprehension of the total subject will be much less than expected (16). Smith (14) indicates the child's ability to deal with the content area improves as training is given in the vocabulary of that subject. Reading in Secondary Schools (8) shows the desirability of vocabulary development through the use of context meaning, word study, and the attainment of word attack skills as a means of improving over-all comprehension.

Bamman (1) points out that reading social studies is more difficult than the reading of narrative material to which the elementary student is accustomed. The vocabulary is not controlled, the student must organize a mass of unrelated facts, the ideas are very complex, and much previous knowledge must be brought forward to assist the student in developing concepts.

Vocabulary is a general term which covers various sub-divisions. Bamman (1) has made six headings to include the types of difficult word

areas the student may meet in his social studies work.

a. technical terms - would include words such as feudalism, vassal, primogeniture, guild, and crusade

b. multisyllabic words - formidable words are totalitarian, accountability, telecommunication, endowments, philanthropic.

c. abstract words - maturation would help the student to understand such words as liberty, justice, equality, democracy, and despotism.

d. general terms - multiple meanings arise in the use of elevator since the student may not realize we speak of a grain elevator.

e. mathematical terms - usually included in the use of time designations, area, population statistics, graphs, and charts.

f. concepts - these words produce mental images which are really abstractions such as "tolerance". A student's view will broaden as he begins the study of human relations. What is tolerance to one child may be intolerance to another.

Jenkinson (4) has an interesting approach to vocabulary development as she uses the term Functional Word Knowledge. She has divided the topic into three areas:

a. function words - this area includes small words that are often ignored. Some examples of structure words are as follows:

(1) cause and effect - because, since, so that

(2) suggest condition - unless, if, although

(3) indicate contrast - whereas, while

(4) time relationships - as, before, when, after

(5) parallel ideas - however, therefore, hence

b. shifts in word meaning - the use of familiar words in unfamiliar context, i.e.

(1) cabinet — minister, furniture — clergy

(2) iron curtain? cold war? tariff wall?

c. classifying - since learning often takes place through recognizing similarities and differences, it is essential to use this procedure.

(1) compare similarities and difference - declaration and proclamation

(2) contrast differences - a kingdom and a democracy

(3) paired qualities - kind and gentle
humid and dank

No matter what procedure a teacher may wish to use for the introduction of vocabulary to any lesson it is vital that we understand the value of instruction in this area. If we wish to improve comprehension, we need to broaden our approach to include vocabulary development as a basic tool.

The SQ3R Study Formula

Students need to be taught how to study Social Studies as well as other subject areas. We often find elementary and secondary pupils who are so disorganized in their approach to the basic procedures that they do not know where or how to begin a study program. Robinson (9) proved the effectiveness of his study formula in his examination of college students study habits. As a result we have the SQ3R study formula in use throughout the entire educational strata.

Preston (6) suggested a modified approach for the elementary student beginning at the intermediate level. Strange (16) indicates a more difficult process whereby students at the high school level ask themselves a general question which cuts across the author's organization. We would not expect the same thoroughness or ability from an elementary youngster as we anticipate from a high school student. Since the application of the study method is one of degree dependent upon the grade level of the student, it is worthwhile to consider the following approach as a means of reaching most children.

Here is a sample lesson for the development of the SQ3R Study

Formula that may be used from the intermediate level right on to the high school student. The language has been simplified in order that almost any child who reads at the fourth level or above might be able to understand the directions. Naturally, the teacher would direct the beginning lessons in the use of the procedure but the student could retain the directional sheet for further study and reference.

S. . . . . Survey

Q. . . . . Question

R. . . . . Read

R. . . . . Recite

R. . . . . Review

STEP I - SURVEY

Look through the whole assignment before you actually read to answer your questions. You should look for all of the following items before you begin to read.

A. Bold face type

This is the heavy, dark, large print at the beginning of each chapter, section, and paragraph. Look at the name of the chapter and the section heading.

B. Pictures with Captions

The picture and its caption, which is the explanation of the picture, will help to tell about the material you will soon read.

C. Charts

A chart will give you much information at a glance. When you read the chart before you read the story, you will have much information to help you understand the paragraphs.

D. Drawings with Captions

A drawing is considered the same as a picture when you survey the material before you read. Look at the drawing and its caption to help you understand the chapter or section.

E. Maps and Diagrams

A map or diagram will explain many paragraphs of written material if you look at it before you begin to read. A map or diagram may reduce half a page of writing into one small drawing.

F. Summary

At the end of most chapters there is a summary. The summary tells very briefly about the information that is in the chapter. After you have read the summary, you will usually have a very good idea of the main topics in the chapter.

G. Questions

The author has added questions to his chapter to direct your attention to some of the important ideas. Be sure to look at the questions before you read the selection. This step will help you to be ready for the new thoughts you are about to read.

STEP 2 - QUESTION

Use the bold face type to make your question. If the heading of the section is "Great Plains Soil", use these words to make the following questions.

What is Great Plains soil like?

or

Of what is Great Plains Soil made?

or

What must farmers consider when using Great Plains soil?

If there is no bold face type to help you make a question, use this question.

What does the author expect me to learn about <u>this</u> topic from studying <u>this</u> selection?

A. <u>Study Guide</u>

1. Fold or rule a sheet of large-sized notebook paper lengthwise, down the middle.
2. Write your question on the left side of the page.
3. Answer your questions on the right side of the page.
4. When you write your answers use only Key Words to describe the ideas or facts you have decided are most important. <u>Do not write long answers</u>.
5. Be sure you have read the paragraph or section after your question and thought about it before you write the answer.

STEP 3 - READ

Read the paragraph or section to find the answer to your question. Do not stop to read every word carefully; concentrate on finding the main point. You cannot remember all the facts you find, so you must look for the important ones. There are usually one or two main points for each section.

STEP 4 - RECITE

After you have finished the assignment, go back over the lesson immediately. Cover the right side of the paper where the answers are written, and ask yourself the questions on the left side of the page.

Answer the question orally. That means you must say the answers "out loud" so that you will know if you have made a mistake.

If you find you cannot answer the questions, look back at the key words which are your answers. Sometimes you will have to go back to the book to restudy the particular part which you did not understand or have forgotten.

Step 4 is very important. When you give yourself an immediate quiz on what you have studied, it is the best possible way to prevent forgetting.

Practice until you can recite the whole study guide without looking back to the key words. Then practice some more. This extra practice is what pays off.

STEP 5 - REVIEW

About four weeks later, and also before every examination, go back to your questions and answers again and quiz yourself. Reread only those parts which you have forgotten.

If you have taken steps 1 (Survey), 2 (Question), 3 (Read) and 4 (recite) faithfully, you will find that you do not have too much to restudy.

Study Skills

Here is an area that encompasses all others previously discussed. In order for a student to apply himself to the full understanding of the material he has read in Social Studies, he must have basic knowledge of the study skills pertaining to his subject area.

Spache (15) states most students only receive training in reading of a basal reading type which often concludes by the fourth or sixth grade. This has been the situation until quite recently. The influx of federal aid money has encouraged many school districts to begin advanced training, and even developmental programs at the secondary level as observed by this author as he evaluated some of the Title I Reading Programs. We would certainly agree with Spache (15) and Strange (16) that advanced reading training should be provided by all teachers for effective reading in the content fields.

Smith (14) has pointed out that study skills improve in a specific content area if they are pulled out and given special attention. She has

indicated how teachers may help children if they are taught to recognize the major patterns found in elementary textbooks which deal with content areas. The necessary skills defined for Social Studies are indicated by Smith (14) as follows:

Reading pictures

Reading maps, globes, atlases

Reading for cause and effect content

Reading for comparison

Reading for sequence

Reading to locate dates with events

Reading critically to determine (a) different viewpoints

(b) facts mixed with opinion

(c) and when propaganda is used

Smith's (13) (14) basic grouping of skills common to all areas appears wide enough to include many authors in the field of reading study skills. Five major areas are listed for classification purposes.

1. selection and evaluation
2. organization
3. location of information
4. following directions
5. specialized skills

Other authors have listed these skills necessary for learning social studies. Spache (15) has three categories which include (a) locating information, (b) organizing information, and (c) retaining and using inform-

ation. Russell's (12) emphasis for the social studies area is applied to the ability to locate information in reference books. Bamman's (1) suggested skills fall into the general pattern of information skills. Robinson (10) applied the major areas as established by Smith with a slight variation in the EDL Study Skills Library. Here the same concepts are involved but they are classified under the headings of interpretation, evaluation, organization, and reference (locating information) with the theme of following directions throughout all the lessons. A Teacher's Guide To Curriculum Planning (7) has extensive listings of skills which should be covered by the teacher as instruction is given to students in the Social Studies curriculum.

Robinson's (11) pilot study attempted to determine the reading skills fourth grade pupils actually used as they tried to solve problems in Social Studies. Although many study skills were put into practice properly, it is interesting to note those skills in which deficiencies existed or application was not made by the student. This small group of intermediate students did not make maximum use of retaining details, comparing information, grasping unstated main ideas, remembering relevant details, making inferences, table of contents, use of headings or guides, use of pictorial aids, and use of the index. The author of the pilot study suggests the teacher should be aware of the student's reading skills, analyze the skills necessary to carry out an assignment, and teach those skills required to carry out the assignment.

Karlin (5) has prepared a check list of study skills based upon the classifications suggested by Smith (13) (14). It would be most helpful for the teacher to use this format in planning a program of instruction in study skills for the student.

Checklist of Study Skills (5)

I. Selection and Evaluation

Can the student do the following?

a. recognize the significance of the content
b. recognize important details
c. identify unrelated details
d. find the main idea of a paragraph
e. find the main idea of larger selections
f. locate topic sentences
g. locate answers to specific questions
h. develop independent purposes for reading
i. realize the author's purpose
j. determine the accuracy and relevancy of information

II. Organization

Can the student do the following?

a. take notes
b. determine relationship between paragraphs
c. follow time sequences
d. outline single paragraphs
e. outline sections of a chapter

f. outline an entire chapter

g. summarize single paragraphs

h. summarize larger units of material

III. Location of Information

Can the student do the following?

a. find information through a table of contents

b. locate information through the index

c. use a library card catalogue to locate materials

d. use the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature to locate sources of information

e. use an almanac to obtain data

f. understand and use various appendixes

g. use glossaries

h. use encyclopedias to locate information

IV. Following Directions

Can the student do the following??

a. see the relation between the purposes and the directions

b. follow one-step directions

c. follow steps in sequence

V. Specialized Skills

Can the student do the following?

a. understand the significance of pictorial aids

b. read and interpret graphs

c. read and interpret tables

d. read and interpret charts

e. read and interpret maps

f. read and interpret cartoons

g. read and interpret diagrams

h. read and interpret pictures

Concluding Statement

Many factors are involved in teaching the essential reading skills in Social Studies. Teachers of this content area need to apply diverse methods and techniques in order that students may become more skilled as they read subject matter material. It would be useful to consider the overall approach which includes the directed reading activity, vocabulary development, a workable study formula, and applicable study skills for a worthwhile and effective program at the elementary and secondary level.

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